

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 25

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 105

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 25—Relative to Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 9, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 25, Wieckowski. Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month.

This measure would designate November 2013 as California Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month. It would recognize and acknowledge the significant contributions made by Californians of Sikh heritage to the state and afford all Californians the opportunity to understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared principles of Sikh Americans.

WHEREAS, California and our nation are at once blessed and enriched by the unparalleled diversity of our residents; and

WHEREAS, In our extremely diverse Golden State, there reside an estimated 250,000 Sikh Americans, comprising about 40 percent of the nation's Sikh population; and

WHEREAS, Sikh immigrants have resided in California for more than a century, with the first Sikh immigrants having labored on railroad construction projects, in lumber mills, and in the agricultural heartlands of the Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Imperial Valleys; and

WHEREAS, The first Sikh temple (Gurdwara) in California was established in Stockton in 1912, and Sikh temples have since been established in communities throughout California, some like those in Fremont, San Jose, West Sacramento, and Yuba City being huge with accommodations for thousands; and

WHEREAS, While Sikh Americans have distinguished themselves in numerous areas of endeavor, they have demonstrated particular success in the areas of agriculture, security, trucking, medicine, and in the creation of small, family-owned businesses; and

WHEREAS, Yuba City is referred to by many as "Mini-Punjab" with 10 percent of its population being Sikh or Punjabi; and

WHEREAS, Dalip Singh Saund, a Sikh, born in Punjab, India, earned a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1924, initially earned his livelihood as a foreman of cotton pickers in the Imperial Valley, became a farmer, played a major role in raising the funds needed to lobby for the Luce-Celler Act of 1946 that enabled him and others to naturalize as citizens, and served as an elected judge in the Westmoreland Judicial District from

1952 to 1956, before becoming the first Asian American elected to the United States Congress, where he served three terms from 1957 to 1963; and

WHEREAS, Bhagat Singh Thind, another Sikh born in Punjab, India, a United States Veteran of World War I, who campaigned actively for the independence of India from the British Rule, supported Indian students and lectured on metaphysics throughout the United States, has been honored by the Fred Korematsu Institute as a “Race in the Courts Hero” for fighting his citizenship case in the United States Supreme Court in 1923; and

WHEREAS, Narinder Singh Kapany of Palo Alto, a Sikh born in Punjab, India, is an accomplished scientist and inventor, has been awarded over 100 patents that spurred advances in lasers, biomedical instrumentation, pollution monitoring, solar energy, and more, and is widely acknowledged to be the father of fiber optics, a technology that has allowed for high-speed digital communication; and

WHEREAS, Sikh Americans have served as mayors of California cities, including David Dhillon in El Centro, Gurpal Samra in Livingston, Amarpreet “Ruby” Dhaliwal in San Joaquin, Sonny Dhaliwal in Lathrop, and Kashmir Singh Gill in Yuba City, and numerous Sikh Americans have served as council members of California cities; and

WHEREAS, Sikh American communities of California continue to make important contributions to our state and nation; and

WHEREAS, The Yuba City Sikh Parade, which commemorates the inauguration of the holy Sikh scripture, Siri Guru Granth Sahib, is held on the first Sunday of each November, rain or shine, and, in recent years, the international event has attracted between 60,000 and 100,000 participants; and

WHEREAS, Sikh Americans throughout California celebrate the coronation of Sikh scripture and Sikh festivals at the Gurdwaras and with parades in cities across California and the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Sikh Council of Central California, other Sikh organizations, and individual Gurdwaras participate in interfaith meetings, seminars, conferences, meetings, and functions and share the tenets of their monotheistic religion that respects other religions and welcome all to their Gurdwaras, and try to promote mutual understanding and respect among all peoples; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby designates the month of November 2013 to be California’s Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes and acknowledges the significant contributions made by Californians of Sikh heritage to our state, and by adoption of this resolution, seeks to afford all Californians the opportunity to better understand, recognize, and appreciate the rich history and shared principles of Sikh Americans; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution to the Members of the

Legislature, members of the California Sikh American community, and other interested organizations or persons.

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